

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are all the claims pending in the application as new claims 8-10 are hereby added by this Amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102(b) - Claims 1-3 and 5-7

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3 and 5-7 as being anticipated by Matsuda et al. (US 2001/0055167; "Matsuda"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection as follows.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, "wherein the locator mechanism includes a first element provided in a part of the holder and a second element provided in a part of the holder support portion, wherein the second element removably receives the first element."

The Examiner seems to allege that the X-direction stage 107 and the Y-direction stage 108 correspond to the locator mechanism. (Office Action, pg. 2) In contrast, while the directional stages may correspond to a locator mechanism, there is no support within Matsuda that the locator mechanism disclosed therein shows a first element in a part of the holder and a second element in a part of the holder support portion, wherein the second element removably receives the first element. These features simply do not appear in Matsuda.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is allowable over applied reference Matsuda. Furthermore, Applicant submits that claims 2, 3, 4 and 7 are allowable, at least because of their dependency.

Claim 2 recites, *inter alia*, "wherein at least one of a sliding guide and a rolling guide is a guide for mounting the first element to the second element."

The Examiner seems to allege that elements 107, 108 and 104 of FIG. 13 disclose such an arrangement. However, in contrast to the Examiner's assertion, this linear sliding mechanism of

Matsuda is not a guide for mounting the first element to the second element, but instead, merely a means for moving one of the holders in a contact/non-contact direction relative to the other holder. Thus, Applicant submits that claim 2 is allowable for at least this reason.

With respect to claim 3, the Examiner argues that buffering structure 17 (Fig. 7; para. [0082]) teaches the claimed “pressing mechanism.” However, buffering structure 17, essentially a spring disposed between front end portion 14a and rear end portion 14b of holder 14, does not “press[] the holder against the holder support portion” as recited in claim 3. Buffering structure 17 serves to push front end portion 14a away from rear end portion 14b so as to provide a cushioning effect when stage 20 and slave disk 1 are brought into contact with master disk 2. Thus, buffering structure pushes front end portion 14a *away* from rear end portion 14b; it does not push these two pieces *against* one another. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 3 is patentable over the cited art.

For reasons analogous to those discussed above with respect to claim 3, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 7 is patentable over the cited art.

With respect to claims 5 and 6, there is no recess in a holder support portion as recited in claim 5 nor is there a receiving portion and an engaging portion as recited in claim 6. The Examiner has not identified the structure in Matsuda that is alleged to teach or suggest the elements of claims 5 and 6. For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 5-6 are patentable over the cited art.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

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U.S. Appln No. 10/715,443

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Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

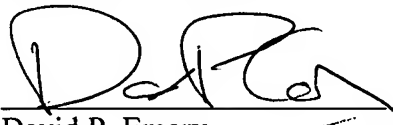
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